

A thankful heart

It was back in the autumn that the question was asked here 'To whom do we give thanks?'

Giving thanks, thankfulness, seems most of all to be an attitude. It shows in big ways and small, in thoughtful letters, a quick phone conversation or a postcard. One reason I enjoying using our local buses is the way in which everyone says 'thank you' (or 'cheers mate') to the driver as they get off. Thankfulness is catching.

It will be our theme throughout January at All Saints' and at St. Luke's and here four of our church members say what *thankfulness* means to them personally.

Jean Park writes

Frequent mention is made in Old and New Testaments of daily thanksgiving—Colossians speaks of "overflowing with thankfulness". Now it would seem our thanks are concentrated on particular occasions. Harvest for one, especially in country areas was a joyful time and even as a "townie" I can remember the excitement of the church looking and smelling so delicious in the days before well stocked supermarkets took away the chance of failed harvests affecting us. The next highlight, Christmas was even more attractive with its carols and candles, nativity plays and presents. Sadly this tends to cover up the real reason for our thanks—the gift of Jesus Christ to the world—a prototype for us all. Maybe as humans we need these peaks of excitement, but as we grow older we realise that we have things to be thankful for every day. Gifts to us from God—our husband/partner, our food, our family, our comfortable homes, our church fellowship, and by remembering these daily in our prayers, gathering them together even with our pains and frustrations, we find God there in the depths.

Liz Buckingham writes

When we realise how much we benefit from knowing God we can fully express our thanks to him.

When my MS relapsed this year and I was having difficulty in walking I persistently prayed, often with others, for healing. It was only after a sermon on Luke chapter 17 that I realised I had been praying for healing without thanking God for the improvements I had already made. I am not back to where I was before the relapse, but I am so much better than I was six months ago and hoping to go back to work.

We should all trust in God and be thankful for his personal concern about us.

Charles Gaisford writes

So many times I catch myself thinking 'if only I had ...' or 'wouldn't it be great if I could ...' The question is do I really need this, or do I really need to do that? I'm so easily tempted by my thirst for more; an easy trap to fall into. Instead if I were to take stock of what material goods I already have and what experiences I've already enjoyed maybe I would be a more contented person.

The more I have it seems, the less prone I am to saying thanks, especially for the small regular things in life.

I wonder if these are some of the reasons God reminds us to practise thanksgiving?

Jean Creasy writes

Psalm 16 says: The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

For me that has been very true. I give thanks to God for my loving husband, our daughters and our grandchildren, for our many friends and the beautiful places where we have been privileged to live.

But for me thanksgiving isn't just a personal list—it's a way of keeping in touch with our heavenly Father—chatting with him if I can put it that way without being disrespectful. I'm constantly seeing things everywhere which move me to thank him—plants growing out of walls, babies' fingers, clouds, athletes running and—don't laugh! - spiders, potato eyes—all sorts. I celebrate the Life behind what I see and that reminds me of people who lack fullness of life so my 'thank yous' become 'pleases'. I believe he listens and acts which is the greatest of all causes for gratitude.

Sunday Worship

8am, 10am, 6pm
children welcome every
Sunday at 10am:
crèche and activities

St. Luke's, Garford

11 30am 2 January
10 30am 6 February
note new family friendly
time each month

Sunday Specials

4pm 23 January
United Service for all
churchgoers in the parish
followed by tea

10am 30 January
All Age Worship
for everyone

Wednesdays

10am Holy Communion
at Duffield Place
12 noon Café
Sports, Scouts & Social Club
resumes 12 January

Friday Club

5 30pm Manor Farm
for primary age children
resumes 14 January

Saturday

8 30am Men's Breakfast
8 January (N.B.),
5 February
at Baptist Church

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Churchwardens
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**All Saints' Marcham
with St. Luke's Garford**